Massachusetts

Orchid Society

P.O. Box 1041 Medford, MA 02155



NOV 2021

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A BIG shout out to all who participated, helped, and supported our Annual Orchid show! We couldn't have done it without our members, vendors, sister societies, and all who came to enjoy the World of Orchids! Show results and photos will be in the December edition.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

The next several monthly meetings were chosen especially with you in mind...

In *November*, our topic will be Easy Orchids and the presenters will be some of the more experienced members of the Society. They will describe their growing conditions and talk about the various genera they have had luck growing. This is a chance for the new faces to learn who's growing what. If you're a new member, never be afraid to approach any one of us and ask lots and lots of questions. With this meeting, we'll all get a chance to meet you, and you'll get a chance to see who may be best able to answer your growing questions.

In **December**, the Society is holding a Potluck Holiday Dinner and Silent Auction. This is an opportunity for those who still have a little room (think new members again) to expand their collection at what normally turns out to be very fair prices. There will also be an awards ceremony – recognizing the Rock Stars from the past year. And the food's not bad either. The Society will provide holiday ham and turkey as the turnout dictates.

January is our repotting and/or plant mounting demonstration. This is again groomed for the new membership. We'll show you the tricks of the trade and it's an opportunity for you to get some of your collection repotted as we are always looking for demonstration plants.

Look forward to seeing everyone at the 2nd Tuesday of each month at S.O.I.-the same venue where we had our show. Meetings begin promptly at 7:30 PM but show up early and get to know your new orchid friends! If you have a plant in bloom, be sure to bring it and arrive by 7:00, in time to fill out a show table form and place it on the table. There's a Novice Growers category just for you.

FREE "T5" Grow lights

Steve Kirincich has two T5 grow light fixtures he'd like to give (free) to an MOS member: "The Agrobrite fixture has four 54 Watt fluorescent grow lights. The metal housing is a bit longer than 48 inches. The second unit is a Sunlight Supply Sun Blaze 48 that has eight 54 Watt (4 foot) fluorescent bulbs in a sturdy metal housing. Bulbs have been used for approximately 7 months."

To reach Steve via the MOS directory, click <u>here</u> for the "Members Only" tab and search by his first or last name.

I'd like to add that I grew under T5 lights in my basement orchid room for years, with fantastic results. They throw off a bit of heat, so for indoor growers, best used with good ventilation. Maybe great for warm growers? Works for a greenhouse, too! - Your humble newsletter editor, Anne

Greenhouse For Sale

"I picked up this greenhouse for sale in the spring of 1986 in Novogorod, and it remains in perfect shape. It is 7 ft. x 12 ft. x 8 ft. high. with interesting angles. The heat molded from sand glass panels are individually unique to require less shade cloth in the summer months. Supplemental lighting inherent to the structure reflects the previous owner's groundbreaking botanical research into using more of the 550nm, or green end of the spectrum, and provides some night visibility. The most beneficial aspect of this structure is its reduced heating expenses, great for us Northeast growers. It maintains a constant 13.7 Cs temperature yearlong with NO external electrical requirements. Unfortunately, no benches are included due to decay. Originally sourced from a Siberia Supply Company - think they were named Chernobyl Surplus (a USSR subsidiary)."

For more information, please contact Viktor Bryukhanov at 7-(978) 426-9784.

Bottle of Absolute Vodka included, compliments of Viktor!

Got extra orchid supplies you want to unload? Looking for garden swaps? Advertise right here in our new Minute Minutes Member's Classified. Email Anne at newsletter@massorchid.org to post in the next newsletter.

We are always interested in suggestions for speakers and topics, plus ideas for special programs for upcoming general meetings. Please email them to mos-board@googlegroups.com.

Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/massorchid and Instagram at www.Instagram.com/massachusettsorchid.

President's Message

It is not an easy task to put on an Orchid Show, let alone a GREAT Orchid Show, but MOS was up to the challenge and did it SUPERBLY. Each-and-every one of you should pat yourself on the back as best you're able.

As the deadline for this article is due, the final numbers are still being massaged. In brief, this is what we know: the gate sales and new members garnered were beyond expectations and let me tell you – vendors normally never boast about their sales and this year they were a bit giddy with their results. I saw most of the Society members over the 3 days, some of which I haven't seen in several years. Everyone left with a cell phone full of pictures and if they helped in anyway, a stomach full of food.

Perhaps of even greater importance, we can report to our Sister Societies that we dipped our toes in the Orchid Show Water and the temperature is fine - Jump Right In. For us, that means we'll have displays that'll need to be collected and assembled for Cape and Island/New Hampshire/Ocean State and perhaps Amherst (they are pretty sure they can get the public school auditorium as the usual venue despite COVID) in the very near future.

So, everyone keep growing well – we're going to need your plants and display setup expertise a couple more times in-the-near future.

I like writing this column when you guys – the members of the society – make it so easy. GOOD JOB ALL.

Your Humble Orchid Murderer, Brandt Moran



Remember to renew your membership

It's time once again to reap the harvest of the events, benefits and camaraderie of MOS membership.

For those of you that have already renewed, *Thank You!* For those of you renewing online, click on http://massorchid.org. You can also pay by check or by cash at a meeting, or by mail to: Mass Orchid Society P.O. Box 1041, Medford, MA 02155.

Thank you for supporting your Massachusetts Orchid Society! Membership Committee



MOS show table summary 2021-2022

	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	people choice award	Total
Brigitte Fortin					1				1
Mike Badia					2				2
Daryl Yeardon					4				4
Bob Francey					1				1
Leslie James					1				1
Millard Hennessey					2				2
Brandt					1	4		September	5
Bob and Marsha Richter					1				1
Ron Maloney						1			1
Dina Deresh						2			2
Anne Pfaff						2			2
Virginia Ehas-Morse***						1			1
Total # ribbons	C) (0 0	0) 13	10	C)	23
Total plants	()				17			17

^{***} beginner

MOS show table results October 2021

Judges: B., George B., Steve K.

Scribe: Linda A.

Exhibitor's Name	plant's name	Lights/Windows ill/ Greenhouse	Warm/C ool /inter	Comments	
Virginia E.	Phal. hybrid	w	w	Beginner	
Brandt M.	Pleurothallis polynoidesis	G	1	35 flowers deep maroon	
Brandt M.	Paph. Darling	G	1		
Brandt M.	Bulb. coconium	G	1		
Brandt M.	Cattleya bicolor	G	1		
Ron M.	Dendrochilum tenellum	L	w		
Dina D.	Ctsm. Melana Davison	L	w		
Dina D.	Pleurothallis grobyi	L	w		
Anne P.	Pot. Lover Boy 'NN'	G	ı		
Anne P.	Lc. Loog Tone 'NN'	G	I		

total ribbons: 10 total plants: 17





At October's meeting Anne P. gave an impromptu demo on how to design for a show using plants from the show table, plus a few simple props.

^{**} photos

Ron Maloney ran away with October People's Choice award for his mouth-watering Ctsm. Melana Davison, 'SVO', AM/AOS... again! This plant won in 2020, too. Superb job, Ron!

What Ron has to say about it:

"We can thank Fred Clarke and Carlos Lopez of Sunset Valley Orchids for taking the lackluster Catasetinae orchid family to a new level. Their cross breeding is producing hybrids that are full of amazing colors that can bloom more than once a year. If you have never grown this type of orchid, now is the time to start!

Catesetums have distinct growth and rest periods and I like them because they don't need to go into my grow tent. Mine live outside from about Memorial Day to about the end of September. During this time, they need huge amounts of water and fertilizer (rain helps) and they get direct sunlight for half the day. In October I begin reducing water and stop fertilizing, which initiates their winter rest period.

To get them to bloom, it's important to stop all watering by December. The leaves will turn yellow and fall off, and some of the species will flower at that time. Store them in a cool place for the winter and wait for the new growth to start in the spring. This particular plant is a mini-Catesetum. I like the mini's because they only grow to about one foot tall.

If you're not already familiar with Sunset Valley Orchids, look them up. They're a great place to do business with!"



Ctsm. Melana Davison 'SVO' AM/AOS, Ron M.

More Show Table Winners



Dendrochilum tenellum, Ron M.

Bulbo. coconium , Brandt M.



Phal. Hybrid (peloric), Virginia E.-M.



C. bicolor, Brandt M.



Paph. Darling, Brandt M..



Pot. Lover Boy 'NN', Anne P.



Lc. Loog Tone 'NN', Anne P



Pleurothallis polynoidae, Brandt M.



Pleurothallis grobyi, Dina D.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monthly Meeting - "Easy Orchids"

09 Nov 2021 7:30 PM Sons of Italy - 117 Swanton Street, Winchester, MA

New Hampshire Orchid Society Orchid Auction

13 Nov 2021 1:00 PM Bedford Town Hall, Bedford, NH

Monthly AOS Judging at Tower Hill

04 Dec 2021 11:00 AM Tower Hill Botanic Garden – 11 French Dr, Boylston, MA

<u>Monthly Meeting – Holiday Potluck with</u> awards and silent auction

14 Dec 2021 7:30 PM Sons of Italy - 117 Swanton Street, Winchester, MA

<u>Monthly Meeting – Repotting & Mounting</u> Demos

11 Jan 2022 7:30 PM Sons of Italy - 117 Swanton Street, Winchester, MA

Cape and Islands Orchid Society Show

22 – 23 Jan 2022 The Resort and Conference Center 35 Scudder Ave., Hyannis, MA

Monthly Meeting - TBD

08 Feb 2022 7:30 PM Sons of Italy - 117 Swanton St., Winchester, MA

Deep Cut Orchid Society Show

18-20 Feb 2022 Dearborn Market, Holmdel, NJ

New Hampshire Orchid Society Show

25-27 Mar 2022 Courtyard Marriot, Nashua, NH

Our November meeting will feature "Easy Orchids"

Check Page 1 for details!

If upcoming COVID guidelines suggest otherwise, we will convert this meeting to a virtual meeting. Check our website for updates.

<u>Please have your plants on the show table by 7 p.m.</u>

THE TOWN OF WINCHESTER AND SOI REQUIRE MASKS FOR THIS EVENT



Jack and Pam Mulder, long-time Members of the New Hampshire Orchid Society, have made the painfully emotional decision to retire from the sport of orchid growing and cultivation, resulting in the liquidation of Jack's award-winning orchids.

NHOS is holding a "Special" Auction on November 13, 2021 at the Bedford Town Hall. Click <u>here</u> for details and to view the <u>catalog</u> showcasing all of Jack's plants; many of them awarded.

NOV 2021

The following article from the American Orchid Society might be particularly fun for our new-to-growing orchids members. Actually, that pretty much goes for all of us... because when it comes to orchids, there's no end to learning about what they want -and how to give it to them!

Growing Healthy Orchids Indoors



Many orchids are rewarding indoor plants. Once a home-owner has succumbed and bought his or her first orchid, or received one as a gift, meeting a few cultural requirements will coax the plant to flower again.

Orchids are far tougher and hardier than most people think and are, by and large, extremely adaptable. There is a long-standing myth that orchids are difficult, if not impossible, to grow, especially without a greenhouse. With at least 20,000 species and some 100,000 artificial hybrids, there are some notoriously fussy orchids. But there are many rugged, popular, easy-to-grow types that adapt to the temperatures and light conditions found on the average home windowsill. Explore the options and assemble a collection that will put forth exotic flowers year-round.

Orchids are different from other houseplants. Unlike ferns, philodendrons, palms and Swedish ivy, orchids do not grow in soil. Potting an orchid in soil is actually one of the best ways to kill it. Most orchids in the wild are not rooted in the ground, but instead attach themselves by thick roots to the sides of trees and on branches. Clinging to the bark, the plants absorb water and nutrients from the air and rain and whatever drips down the tree. They are adapted to surviving when rain is scarce, hoarding water in thick leaves, stems and roots Watering

In the house, orchids are grown in pots filled with chips of bark, stones, treefern or some other loosely packed material, which keeps roots well-aerated and permits water to drain quickly. Nothing -- repeat, nothing -- kills an orchid faster than letting it sit in a water-logged pot, since a lack of oxygen will cause the roots to suffocate and rot. Water orchids thoroughly, usually about once a week, then allow them to dry slightly before watering again. Orchids are better equipped to withstand periods of forgetfulness than they are to being overwatered.

Temperature

Another difference between orchids and many houseplants is that in nature most orchids experience a big difference between day and night temperatures. Manipulating the temperature of the home so it will drop at least 10 degrees at night, especially in autumn and winter when many orchids initiate buds, will induce the orchids to set flower buds more readily. Achieve this by lowering the temperature on the thermostat. This little trick can mean the difference between an orchid plant that merely lives, and one that thrives and flowers. Orchids are usually classified as warm growing, intermediate and cool growing, with regard to their temperature needs. Many tolerate exposure to warmer or cooler temperatures without suffering damage. The temperature groupings refer to the lowest temperature the orchid prefers during winter nights. Warm-growing orchids, such as phalaenopsis, sulk if temperatures drop much below 60 F. Intermediate growers, such as cattleyas, prefer winter nights around 55° F. Cool-growing orchids, including cymbidiums and odontoglossums, are accustomed to winter nights of 50 F. At the other extreme, most orchids perform

poorly when exposed to temperatures above 90° F.

Light

Orchids are also classified into three other groups depending on the intensity of light they require -- high (3,000 foot-candles), medium (2,000 foot-candles) and low (1,000 to 1,500 foot-candles). Most orchids require plenty of light, preferably at least six hours a day. Many orchids can withstand more or less than the amount of recommended light, but providing more light enhances flowering potential. Conversely, inadequate light prevents orchids from flowering, although they will grow.

Leaf color indicates if the amount of light is adequate. The lush, rich, dark green of most houseplants is not desirable in orchid leaves. Dark green leaves are attractive, but signal there is not enough light. A grassy green color (light or medium green with yellowish tones) means the plant is receiving sufficient light to bloom. Gauge light intensity with this simple hand/eye test: Put your hand 6 inches above the leaves and look at the shadows cast. A sharp-edged shadow means high light; a soft-edged shadow indicates medium to low light; no shadow at all means the light is insufficient for an orchid to flower.

Southern- and eastern-facing windows work best for orchids; western windows can be too hot in the afternoon; and northern ones are usually too dark. Too much direct light causes leaves to sunburn -- the leaves bleach out to white, ultimately dying and turning black -- so it may be necessary to reposition plants as the seasons change. Move plants away from or toward the window to manipulate the amount of light. A sheer curtain will cast light shade. Positioning sheets of Mylar or another reflective material in the growing area will increase usable light, a handy trick for the winter when light levels are often reduced.

Artificial Light

Where windows with adequate light are unavailable, consider cultivating orchids beneath artificial light. Four 4-foot-long fluorescent tubes placed 6 inches apart side by side should do the trick. Two shop-light fixtures with cool-white bulbs will suffice. Special grow lights, sold under various trade names, are considerably more expensive and extend the light spectrum. The grow lights may reap better results, although data on this are conflicting. Place plants 6 to 8 inches below the tubes. Put the lights on a timer set to operate the bulbs for 14 to 16 hours a day. Many orchids, such as phalaenopsis and paphiopedilums, will be content. Orchids requiring more light, such as vandas and cymbidiums, however, need natural sunlight or high-intensity discharge lights to bloom. A fluorescent fixture in a dimly lit window adds extra light to natural sunlight, too, and can mean the difference between flowers and no flowers. Orchids that do not flower often require more light.

Fertilizing

Orchids do not require abundant doses of fertilizer. However, to maintain healthy plants and see blooms on a regular basis, apply a weak solution of 20-10-20 fertilizer once a week. Each month, water with plain water to flush out any accumulated fertilizer salts. Dilute the fertilizer to one-quarter the strength recommended on the package. When in doubt, give less rather than more. Switch to a blossom-booster fertilizer in the autumn, when many orchids are initiating flower buds. Blossom-booster is a fertilizer ratio with higher phosphorus and lower nitrogen, such as a 10-30-20 formula. Many orchids are winter bloomers, which makes them even more special as houseplants. They fill an often otherwise flowerless void in the drabbest of months. Peak of orchid bloom usually occurs between December and April.

Humidity

One of the things orchids greatly appreciate is adequate humidity. Fifty percent or more is necessary, but the atmosphere in most homes, especially those with dry, hot-air heat, is far below that. Raising the humidity around orchids will result in better flowering. Some tricks to increase humidity: operate a humidifier near the plants; place the pots on flat, black pebbles set in a tray in which water is added until it almost covers the stones ("Egg crate," which is the lattice-like plastic grid sold in hardware stores for suspension ceiling lights, is a good, more steady alternative to the pebbles.); group the orchids together; or cordon off the growing area with clear plastic (but continue to provide ventilation to prevent bacteria from becoming a problem).

The AOS thanks Judy White for this essay.

What orchids taught me — on their own time

When we judge living things as disposable — of value to us only when in bloom — we lose more than we think when we throw them away.

By Joelle Renstrom, reprinted from The Boston Globe, October 7, 2021



The world's most popular flowering plant for sale in London. JUSTIN TALLIS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Sales of orchids have soared throughout the pandemic, making them the world's most popular blooming plant. Peering into an orchid flower is like putting a conch to one's ear — an epiphany of size, a lesson in how small things can open worlds. The blooms of *Dracula simia* resemble the faces of monkeys; the great orchid blossoms into a spiky angel; the *Caladenia melanoma* looks like a ballerina in fifth position. Who wouldn't want one in their home, especially during a long housebound stretch?

Orchids have a reputation for being high maintenance. So do humans. The latter want beautiful things, but only if they're easy to care for. This is where a common but misguided bit of orchid care advice comes in — not "Just add water" but "Just add an ice cube." Because some people throw orchids away after the petals fall, either because they think the plant is dead or because they no longer find it attractive, some flower sellers would have us believe that a single ice cube a month in an orchid's pot is the key to a long life, an approach designed to prevent both under- and overwatering.

Too bad it doesn't work. The result is that orchids end up in the trash.

Their dispensability embodies a notion that living things lose value and appeal when they're challenging or when they stop pleasing us. Adherents of this idea, though, miss out on the rewards. It's thrilling to notice a flower spike jutting from an orchid and knowing that you helped coax it to grow by understanding its needs. That's where orchids' real beauty comes from.

In a case of cross-species "Takes one to know one," only humans would describe orchids as temperamental. On an evolutionary scale, they're anything but: More than 25,000 species exist, four times the number of mammal species. Orchids proliferate across the globe partly because they achieved what half of all ancient plant life could not: They survived the third extinction event by diversifying. A rapid evolutionary response



Giant Helleborine, or Epipactis gigantea. More than 25,000 orchid species exist. FLICKR/RAWPIXEL.COM

prompted orchids to develop an additional set of genes and then split into five subfamilies. When properly maintained, orchids can live longer than humans — a tiger orchid in the Singapore Botanic Gardens is roughly 160 years old.

"There is something clever and un-plantlike about their determination to survive . . . and their genius for seducing human beings," Susan Orlean writes in "The Orchid Thief". Indeed, orchids have cast spells on people for centuries. In the 1800s, royalty sought them as symbols of wealth. The mania, which parallels the current pandemic houseplant craze, was dubbed "orchidelirium." Collecting orchids required money and patience, as specimens had to grow large enough to divide and propagate, a more challenging process than it is with most other flowers. (Orchids are also difficult to grow from seed.) Modern technology allows for much faster cultivation and hybridization of orchid species and has helped fuel their booming popularity.

I've observed in my orchids a kind of spooky suggestion of sentience — their long, fingerlike roots stretch in exploration, brush a shelf before moving toward the wall, feel out their surroundings. Orchids seem to be more alien creature than plant.

So why do people have trouble keeping them alive?

The ice cube hack sheds light on the answer: Instead of being about what the orchid needs, it's about convenience for the human tending it. Customers get a beautiful living thing that poses no inconvenience. Good deal, right? They are not unlike those who sought cute, furry relief during the pandemic but are returning or abandoning their new pets.

Acquiring an orchid means entering into a relationship. I feel that way every time I get a plant, but with orchids it's more serious — they don't date casually. Owning orchids means learning about their individual requirements and doing my best to provide what they need. That might include setting them on pebble trays, using a fan to increase air flow, or buying special fertilizer — all reasonably simple accommodations, no blood sacrifice required.

Plant care has one overarching rule: Try to replicate the plant's natural conditions. If a plant grows on the forest floor, it needs dappled sunlight, not intense direct light. If a plant grows in the desert, it doesn't need much water. This applies to orchids, though one has to identify a species in order to tend it properly. Lady Slipper orchids can grow in the soil of New England forests, while many tropical orchids grow on trees and absorb nutrients from the air. The most common orchid is the *Phalaenopsis*, or moth orchid. This species, native to Southeast Asia and northern Australia, naturally doesn't like the cold.



Phalaenopsis, or moth orchid, is native to Southeast Asia and northern Australia and doesn't like the cold.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/RAWPIXEL.COM

Orchids want a real shower and a thorough drying out. This mimics the natural cycle and encourages deeper root growth. Ice, which melts slowly and trickles water down through the plant, is the opposite of a good, soaking rain. It can also damage an orchid's roots and leaves. And then there is the question of patience, which humans tend not to win prizes for, either. Once an orchid drops its flowers, it can be another six months before it blooms again — and only then with assiduous tending. Putting on a colorful show takes lots of energy. More often, orchids are given up for dead and wind up in the bin.

Last year, my partner sent me three mini-orchids for Valentine's Day. They froze during shipping, arriving flowerless and frostbitten. The company said their orchids die in transit all the time and that they'd send replacements (I declined). "Breakage," or in this case dispensability, is baked into countless business models, but the breathtaking beauty of an orchid isn't something humans should feel comfortable throwing away. One of the frozen orchids died. I cut back the leaves on the other two, revealing coils of struggling roots, and I tended them as best I could, even when I couldn't observe any improvements. This spring, 15 months after arriving half-dead in a box, one of them bloomed. Fuchsia flowers emerged in a triumph of beauty, as though the plants somehow knew how close they'd come to ending up in the trash.

Joelle Renstrom is a science writer who teaches at Boston University.



•THE AOS CORNER•



Seasonal Orchid Care November/December

Click here for Checklist

Organizing orchid culture and its chores by season is a convenient way to make sure that your orchids get the proper care at the right time. Becoming in tune with your plants' growth cycles creates a connection with the natural world and makes you a better grower.

The American Orchid Society Northeast Judging Center Is Back!

In-person monthly judging has resumed at Tower Hill Botanic Garden, 11 French Dr, Boylston, MA 01505. We meet in Classroom C and are adhering to State of Massachusetts pandemic safety rules and encourage exhibitors to bring orchids to be judged within the guidelines outlined below.

10:30AM - Doors open and announcements

11:00AM - 12:00PM - Educational presentations

12:00PM - All plants to be judged must be checked in by this time

12:00PM - 1:00PM - Plant research and lunch break

1:00PM - 4:00PM AOS plant judging

This event will adhere to all current local and state social distancing guidelines during the pandemic, as safety is our priority

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