



San Fernando Valley Orchid Society Newsletter

May 2015

Volume 55 Issue 5

May 6, 2015: Orchid Care Basics: Mastering the Art of Growing Orchids at Home

Our next monthly meeting we will be showing an educational video entitled Orchid Care Basics: Mastering the Art of Growing Orchids at Home. The host of our program is Mr. Mark S. Lee, a well-known Orchid Grower and expert. Mr. Lee discusses many aspects of growing including light requirements, watering and feeding techniques, repotting, selecting the proper potting mix, managing pests and disease and much, much more. It is a well done program and whether you are just getting started growing or have been growing orchids for years, everyone will learn something.

Pam Aitchison will also be giving us a virtual tour through our very own website: sfvos.com. Pam will demonstrate all the features of the website including orchid care, culture sheets, links, as well as show you how to find instructional videos on YouTube. Please join us for our next SFVOS monthly meeting. It should be very interesting and informative.



(Left) Laelia pacavia

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

At our annual orchid auction we were happy to welcome several guests and several of them joined our society. We would like to offer a hearty welcome to Judy Skelton, Marie Handile, Abraham and Dana Groina and Helen Berger. We hope you will enjoy learning about orchids with us. Current members, please introduce yourselves and make them feel very welcome at our meetings.

The Many Benefits of SFVOS Membership

1. Learn about collecting, growing, repotting, and pest control from our monthly meetings' guest speakers, many of whom are local, national and internationally **recognized orchid experts**. For just the cost of your annual dues, you can see their fabulous photographs, techniques, and presentations. You have the opportunity to listen and ask questions of these experts up close and personal. How great is that!
2. Rub elbows with your fellow orchid enthusiasts. Many of our members have become good friends. Several of our members are expert growers in their own right. Ask questions, swap ideas and learn from each other, while you share a tasty snack from our well stocked refreshment table every month.
3. Share your beautiful blooming orchids and see what the other members are growing at our monthly **"Show and Tell"**. Exhibitors have the opportunity to share information about their special plants and members can ask questions. You can also bring your camera to test your photographic skills.
4. As a member, you will receive our Monthly **SFVOS Newsletter** via email (or by snail mail). Each issue is packed with the information you need to keep up with what's happening in the orchid world. Every month you receive a preview of our upcoming meeting, plus a Calendar of upcoming events, educational articles, and much, much more.
5. You'll have unlimited access to our own **sfvos.com** website that has hundreds of tips on how to care for your orchids. Discover what's happening in the orchid world, look up a solution to a problem or download culture sheets. There is also a library of past issues of our Newsletter, links to instructional videos, and Monthly Orchid Care Checklists just to name a few of the features found on our website.
6. Take home fabulous orchids every month from our **Plant Opportunity Table (POT)**. For just the cost of a few "opportunity" tickets you could be a big winner.
7. You are invited to attend our annual Holiday Party in December to share a meal and fun times.

The San Fernando Valley Orchid Society is a non-profit organization. Your membership dues pay for our Guest Speakers every month, provide the plants for the POT each month and pay our ongoing expenses such as our rent, website fees, and required insurance costs. Our Monthly meetings are held on the 1st Wednesday of the month at the Sepulveda Garden Center, located at 16633 Magnolia Blvd, Encino, CA 91436. Meeting starts at 7:00 pm.

2015 Orchid Calendar of Events

April 29	SFVOS Board Meeting	7pm	Home of Marcia Melcombe
May 2	AOS Pacific South Regional Judging	10am	The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino
May 2	Palomar Orchid Society Auction	Preview: 10am Auction: 11am	Pavilion at Lake San Marcos
May 6	SFVOS Monthly Meeting	7pm	Sepulveda Garden Center
May 9	Hatfield Orchid Sale	10am.– 1pm	Yamada Company Potting Demo 11 am
May 15	Orchid Odyssey	10am.– 2pm	San Diego Zoo
May 16	14th Annual Cymbidium Seedling Clearance Sale	9am - 4pm	Casa de las Orquideas
May 21	San Gabriel Valley Orchid Hobbyists Annual Auction	6:00pm-10pm	LA County Arboretum and Botanic Garden
June 13	AOS Pacific South Regional Judging	10am	The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino
June 13	Orchid Digest Speaker's Day		Huntington Gardens Botanical Center, San Marino
June 19	Orchid Odyssey	10am.– 2pm	San Diego Zoo

AOS: Monthly Checklist for May and June



(Left) *Cattleya purpurata*, formerly in the genus *Laelia*, is without a doubt one of the most stately orchids to bloom in this season. © G. Allikas (Right) *Paphiopedilum Maudiae* is a perennial favorite slipper orchid.

Cattleya: The last of the spring-flowering types -- those that flower from a ripened hard pseudobulb -- will be finishing, while the first summer-blooming types will be showing buds on their rapidly growing, soft pseudobulbs. Both may need potting, as signaled by deteriorating mix, this month. The spring bloomers present no problems, as you will be dealing with fully ripe, well-hardened pseudobulbs. They will be ready to root on the mature front pseudobulb and will establish quickly. The summer bloomers, will be brittle and may be in bud. Nonetheless, experienced growers know that unless potted now, they may not root later, as this type tends to be seasonal in its rooting behavior. Stake the lead growth to avoid breakage. May can still present some changing light conditions that can lead to burning of the foliage if the plants have not been properly acclimatized. Allow them to build up their tolerance to higher light gradually. Changing light and temperatures can also be the source of some frustration when trying to determine when plants need watering. While cattleyas will be entering into a period of rapid growth starting this month, they have still not built up sufficient momentum to be significantly slowed by your missing a day or two of watering owing to dark weather. As always, it is safer to err on the dry side than on the wet. It is important, though, especially to the summer bloomers. Too much shade will cause rapidly developing inflorescences to droop unattractively.

Paphiopedilum: The *Paphiopedilum Maudiae* types will be well into their season now, so a careful eye should be used toward staking. Do not be too anxious to stake, however. Many of this type, if staked too soon, will develop nodding flowers that do not face the observer. It is better to allow the flowers to ripen naturally, then support the spike right below the ovary for best display. This is especially common in *Paphiopedilum fairrieianum*-derived hybrids. If you have to do something when you first see the emerging spikes, just put the stake in the pot next to the spiking growth. Not only will this help you, but you will be able to see where the spikes are, so you can continue to pay attention to their development. The multifloral types will be entering their most active growth phase, so lots of light, water and fertilizer are called for to mature their large growths. Many will be spiking in the next couple of months, so be on the lookout for the emerging inflorescences. These may benefit from earlier staking than most, as the inflorescences grow so quickly in some cases that they can be quite soft. Again, best support is right below the ovary of the first flower. This will allow the most natural presentation of the blooms.

Phalaenopsis : Except for the latest-spiking plants, all phalaenopsis should be ready for potting or already potted. Because phalaenopsis are tropical plants, they tend to be seasonal in their rooting behavior. The critical point for potting is when new roots emerge from the base of the plant. This is absolutely the best time to repot a phalaenopsis. The summer-flowering types, based on *Doritis* background, have ideally already been potted and are becoming freshly established, ready to support their soon-to-emerge spikes for the summer season. Phalaenopsis potted at the right point in their growth cycle will reestablish almost immediately, with fresh roots growing into the new medium nearly uninterrupted. As soon as the flush of new root growth is seen, begin regular watering and fertilizing to make maximum use of the major growing season. Do not get over-exuberant with your watering, though, allowing water to splash between plants. This can be a source of infection for both water-borne pathogens and viral contamination. Phalaenopsis are much more susceptible to virus than was previously thought. Take extra care to keep your collection free of bacterial and viral problems, which you can accomplish by maintaining a clean growing area.

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

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Tips for growing Cattleyas

- 1) Allow potting media to dry out thoroughly between watering, this helps to develop a good root system
- 2) Re-pot when the new root tips are just starting to show at the base of the newest lead growth
- 3) Use a well drained potting media and don't over-pot, the pot should allow for 2-3 years of growth

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Polystichum munitum
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(Wood Fern Family)

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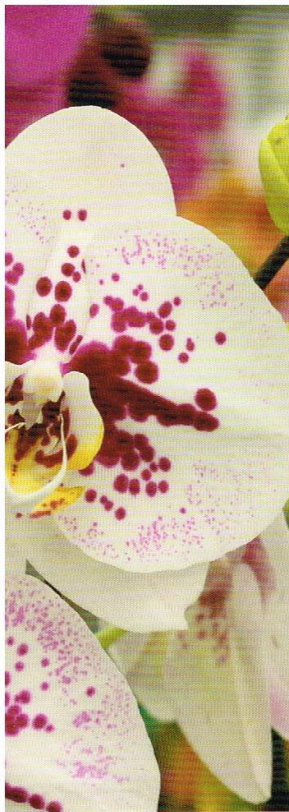
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Growing Orchids Outdoors in Southern California

Southern California - especially Los Angeles County - has become firmly associated in people's minds the world over as the place for sun, surfing, smog, and Hollywood stars. As with many other things "everybody knows," the reality may not be what you've come to expect. What's this got to do with growing orchids outside? Everything!

"Everybody knows" the weather is always warm and wonderful in southern California, right? Wrong! It may be glorious for the Rose Bowl Parade, but by mid-January temperatures in many areas often drop into the 30s at night and may even hit freezing. So, to all those growers who began reading this article to indulge a sense of fantasy, I offer this possibility: If we can grow orchids outside, our experience may help you reduce exorbitant heating bills.

"Everybody knows" tropical orchids need greenhouses to keep them from temperatures below 55°F, right? As the song says, "It ain't necessarily so." Orchids don't read books. There will always be difficult plants, but there seem to be far more species and hybrids that have wider temperature tolerance than is generally recognized.

Laelia (syn. *Cattleya*) *purpurata* var. *carneais* grown in intense sunlight by the author, who hangs the plant up near the shade cloth of her growing area.



Those are the plants, from angraecums to zygotetals, that are thriving outdoors right now in the gardens of outdoor orchid growers in southern California. Individuals have been doing it for years. I was told of one woman, recently deceased, who raised phalaenopsis in West Hollywood just north of Sunset Boulevard 20 or 30 years ago. But there is no bank of centralized information on which to draw. In researching this article, I talked to and will share with you the experiences of four other outdoor growers, all of us working under different conditions. The common thread seems to be curiosity and a willingness to experiment.

Don't think outdoor growing is a panacea. If you want perfection, you'd better stick with your greenhouse. Outdoors, a sudden hailstorm may give your cymbidiums unplanned freckles. The only snail within a mile may dine on that about-to-open bud. Or arguing hummingbirds may klutz into a trigger-happy *Catsetum*. Exposure to the natural elements makes many plants seem more robust, but it also can exact a price. **(Right) Brassavola acaulis**

ABOUT MICROCLIMATES

Southern California has a Mediterranean climate, i.e. sunny, hot, dry summers, with the rainy season during the moderate winters. The major influences are the Pacific Ocean and the continental land mass. The ocean moderates the temperature, keeping summers from being too hot and winters too cold. The dry continental land mass keeps humidity much lower than is common on the East Coast or even during summers in the Midwest. Local geography has a very real effect on weather patterns. The hills, canyons, valleys, and mountains may block Pacific breezes or funnel desert winds. Cold air flows down slopes and pools in the lowest basins, so hillside temperatures tend to be warmer in winter. The closer to the ocean, the more moderate the temperatures. The temperature variation directly related to geography can be dramatic. On a summer day when the San Fernando Valley hits temperatures of more than 100°F, the



Brentwood / Westwood side of Sepulveda Pass only five or six miles away will often bask in the 70s. The average yearly rainfall for Los Angeles is only 15 inches, but local geography can mean more rainfall or less, depending on the altitude and prevailing winds.

One of the basic tools of local gardeners is the Sunset New Western Garden Book by the editors of Sunset Magazine.



While it does provide some information on orchids (specifically *Bletilla*, *Brassavola*, *Calypso*, *Cattleya*, *Coelogyne*, *Cymbidium*, *Cypripedium*, *Dendrobium*, *Epipactis*, *Habenaria*, *Laelia*, *Lycaste*, *Miltonia*, *Odontoglossum*, *Oncidium*, *Paphiopedilum*, *Phalaenopsis*, *Pleione*, and *Vanda*), it follows the commonly accepted temperature requirements that outdoor growers have learned to ignore. Its strength lies in its maps of the major microclimates of the West and in its extensive listing of non-orchid plants, describing those areas where they will grow best.

When you look up which of the microclimate zones in which you live, you actually are giving yourself the benefit of years of data collection on temperature, rainfall, humidity, and major climatic influences. Now, instead of looking through the

listing to see what the Sunset editors suggest will grow well in your area, work from the other direction. Observe plants in your yard, down the street, etc. See if you can spot plants listed as frost-sensitive or epiphytic orchid companions such as bromeliads and staghorn ferns. These are the best clues to the actual conditions in your area. Every yard has some areas that are more protected than others. Talk to your neighbors. Every time you find a frost-sensitive plant being grown out of its recommended area, you are coming up with more information you can use growing orchids outside.

Australian author J. N. Rentoul provides southern California experimenters with possibilities and helpful suggestions in his books entitled *Growing Orchids* because of the similarity of our climate with his. *Orchids for the Outdoor Garden* by A. W. Darnell is a bit more scholarly and directed at Britain, but it offers a compilation of orchids that can survive the frost. The problem is discovering whether they also can take our summer heat. **Text and photos by Susan M. Stephenson Republished from AOS Bulletin Vol.56, #3; March 1987**



Phalaenopsis or Moth Orchids, appreciate growing in bright light, but not in direct sun.

Upcoming Elections

Your Society needs YOU! Every year in June, we elect our officers and Board of Directors for the coming year. Our programs, speakers and POT do not automatically happen. It requires planning and some work.

We are actively seeking members who can serve on our Board of Directors, or as an officer for the 2015-2016 year. All that is required is to attend a short monthly Board meeting, located in Northridge, and to bring your ideas and suggestions for improvement. If any of you are able to step up and help out, please email Millie Peskay: peskay@att.net or Pam Aitchison: pam@aitchison.org.

Refreshments

Refreshments for our May Meeting will be provided by members whose last names begin with S through W. They are Ed Sarraffian, Frank & Florence Shimizu, Judy Skelton, Judith Tetove, Robert & Marie Thomas, Falu Trieu, Sonia Villarroel and Juana Willilams. Of course, all members are encouraged to bring snacks for all our meetings.

Some suggestions are healthy snacks such as (cut up) fruit and veggies, chips, homemade goodies such as cookies and brownies and anything else you care to contribute. Thank you in advance for supporting your society.

Membership Renewal

July 1st is the beginning of our society's fiscal year. It is also the time to renew your membership. Please see our Membership chairperson, Marcia Melcombe to renew your dues.

Over the last few months, the board members have been considering ways to raise enough funds to cover the cost of providing our programs and services. The cost of providing these services is on the rise. Our annual dues were much below the average but more importantly, it has become apparent that most Expert Speakers have increased their speaking fees in the past two years. Additionally, the plants we purchase for our POT have also gone up and the rent at the Sepulveda Garden center has also increased. To top things off, our annual fundraiser, the orchid auction, did not bring in as many funds as we had hoped for, and was far less than it had been in past years. We auctioned off a lot of plants, but most of the prices were very low.

One idea is to raise the price of our raffle tickets to \$.50 cents each. The price is still very reasonable, but with the old way, some people were buying \$30 worth of raffle tickets and with the quantity discount they had so many tickets, they were winning all the plants. We think the new way will make it fairer for everyone.

After much contemplation, we decided to raise our annual dues from \$25.00 to \$35.00 per individual and from \$35.00 for a couple to \$45.00 for a family membership, covering two or more people living in the same household. We feel the dues are still a bargain for all we have to offer and are in line with what most orchid societies are charging elsewhere. Please let us know if you have other suggestions or any questions.

Lastly, we have made great strides this year in gaining some new members and we are grateful. Please remember to invite your friends and neighbors to come as guests of our society and encourage them to join. The more members we have the better we can serve the membership. Thank you for your continued support of the San Fernando Valley Orchid Society.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I am so grateful to all our members and friends for their diligent work and generous contributions to our annual Orchid Auction fundraiser this year. Many of our members thoughtfully donated orchids from their personal collections. Contributors were Frank and Florence Shimizu, Ed Saraffian, Art and Aurora Mendoza, Pam Aitchison, Leah Imamura, Charles and Norma Johnson, Bob and Millie Peskay, Kent and Melissa Lovelady and Marie and Bob Thomas. Lee Norris was able to procure a great donation of 24 plants from the Green Thumb Nursery in Canoga Park.

I would also like to recognize James Jordan, Marcia and David Melcombe, Pam Aitchison and Bob and Millie Peskay, who gave up personal time with friends and family to go to Santa Barbara to collect orchid donations from our sponsors.

Additionally, I need to thank all of our members who worked so hard at our annual auction this year, such as Evelyn Mitarai and Marie Feola, for manning our Recorder desk this year, Marcia and David Melcombe, who kept our Plant Hotel organized, Art Mendoza and Frank Shimizu, our very efficient runners and James Jordan who handled the registration table and the Silent Auction. Art Mendoza also filled in as Master Recorder. Bob Peskay did a great job as our cashier, Juana Williams, Marchelle Noster and Sonia Villaroel, took care of our refreshments, and of course we all want to thank Doug Overstreet for being our auctioneer again this year.

I also want to thank Melissa Lovelady and her daughter, Nancy Copsey, for their generous donation of \$240.00 which came from their participation in the Audience Unlimited Program.

Lastly, I would also like to thank Pam Aitchison for being the chairman and Master Recorder of our auction this year. All of our members and guests appreciated your organization and enthusiasm. Again, a hearty thank-you to all of you who donated orchid plants, items for our silent auction and to those who volunteered to help us make this year's auction run so smoothly. We couldn't have done it without you.

Millie Peskay

San Fernando Valley Orchid Society		
Auction Report 2015		
Gross Receipts		\$1,532.50
Expenses		
Santa Barbara Orchid Show	\$59.00	
Plants purchased	\$61.52	
Banners	\$32.70	
Auctioneer	\$75.00	
Plant Runner	\$25.00	
Garden Center Rental Chgs	\$175.00	
Total Expenses	\$428.22	
Net Proceeds to Society		\$1,104.28

Plant Forum Show & Tell

Please bring your blooming orchids for the plant forum. Everyone enjoys seeing what you are growing. You may enter more than one plant at a time and you will receive a free raffle ticket for each plant that you bring in to share with the group. Don't forget your cameras too!

The San Fernando Valley Orchid Society

meets on the 1st Wednesday of the month @ 7:00pm


The Sepulveda Garden Center

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